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A LETTER TO THE Right Honourable, EDWARD Earl of Clarendon, Lord High Chancellour OF ENGLAND.

By *Edward Bagshaw*, Student of *Christ-Church*.

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To the Right Honourable *Edward* Earl of *Clarendon*, Lord High Chancellor of *England*, &c,

Right Honourable,

I Am so much a Stranger to your Lordship, that I beleeve the subscribing my Name, will but little benefit your Lordships knowledge of me; and the cause about which I write, being meerly the clearing of my self, is of so petty concernment, that I am afraid, instead of procuring your Lordships good opinion, it may expose me to your Censure; and though I purge my self from all other my supposed Crimes, yet the very undertaking to trouble your Lordships with a matter so much below you, may render me guilty of a very transcendent presumption.

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But, my Lord, since none who is made so considerable as to be reputed dangerous, can be too mean to appear in his own just defence, and since your Lordship hath already suffered your Goodness so much to be wrought upon, as in a manner to condemn me unheard; and seem to conceive of me, as I have been lately represented, for a direct Enemy unto the *Church*, and but meanly affected to the *State*; I thought it necessary, if for no other respect, yet for the sake of Truth (which always suffers in the Opression of any one of her followers) to remove your Lordships mistakes; and by making a kind of Publick Confession of my Faith, to vindicate my self from those suspicions, which if well grounded would render mee not only incapable of Preferment (the want of which I shall never complain of) but likewise unworthy of any Protection.

To begin therefore with that which makes the loudest noyse in the World, and that is, a supposal that I am no friend to *Bishops*; I need say no more in justification of my self than what I have already asserted, not only in my Latine Dessertation upon that Subject, but likewise in the Preface to that very Book which first begat the suspicion---I then said, that *I was a strict observer of the Doctrine of the Church of* England, *as it was contained in the thirty nine Articles* (as my several Treatises against * *Atheism*, *Socinianism*,

De Presbyteris & Episcopis, Pref. to the Great Question &c.

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† *Socinianiſm*, † *Arminianiſm*, and † *Popery* do witneſs) *and for that which is the prime branch of Diſcipline*, viz. *Eſpiſcopacy, or the ſubordination between Biſhops and Presbyters; I do own it to be of Apoſtolical, Inſtitution that is, as I underſtand it*, Jure Divino; *at leaſt I think I am able to ſay as much for the Order of Biſhops in the Church, as any can for the Baptizing of Infants, for the change of the Sabbath, for Tithes, or for any thing elſe, which hath no particular Divine Precept, but only Primitive practice and example to warrant it. And therefore in conformity to this Principal of mine, when the Biſhops were ſunk loweſt not only for Pomp, but likewiſe for Reputation; and when no temptation either of profit or convenience, but rather the contrary, could work upon me, I then choſe to be Ordained by one of them; which is a ſufficient Argument of my reality and ſtedfaſtneſs.* This, my Lord, was my Judgement then, and bating the words *Iure Divino* (which unleſs they be taken in a limited and reſtrained ſenſe, are more than the Cauſe will bear, becauſe there is no mention of Biſhops as a diſtinct order in Scripture) it is my judgement ſtill, for though I know that φιλοπρωτεια or an *ambitious affectation of Primacy*, and all manner of *Lordlineſs* is to be avoided by *Church-officers*, yet I could never ſee any reaſon why there might not as well be different places and degrees for the Rulers of the Church; as it is evident there is difference of gifts, and great diſparity of endowments: So that for the order of *Biſhops*, as choſen by, and ruling with their *Presbyters*, and by conſent acting in an eminent way of *Power*, I acknowlege it to be a *Primitive* uſage, and accordingly I have been, and am likely always to prove an Aſſertor of them.

† Diſcourſe about *Ieſus*, and the *Reſurrection*
† Diſertationes Anti-Scocinianæ.
† Treatiſe of *Gods Decrees*.
† Treatiſe againſt the *Popes* infallibility.

The Reverend and Learned Biſhop *Brownrigge* on *Nov.* 3. An. 1659.

Having thus cleared my ſelf from that, which becauſe of your Lordſhips great Devotion to the *Church of England* in its preſent Conſtitution was moſt likely to prejudice me in your Lordſhips thoughts. I ſhall next give an Account of my inclination to the *Civil Government*; and though I can make it appear, that during our late Confuſions, I paſſed my Life with ſo much innocence, and ſo little compliance to the then uſurping Powers, that not one Publick Action I did but is capable of a fair and Equitable Plea, yet ſince an *Act of Indempnity and Oblivion* is already paſſed, I think it my Duty ſo far to comply with his Majeſties intention in granting that Act, as not to mention any thing, how defenſible howſoever, which he hath commanded ſhould be utterly forgotten.

To give therfore my present sense, I can sincerely profess, that I have not only a Loyal, but a most Affectionate esteem for his Majesties Person and Government; for since, besides the general obligation of a Subject, I am bound by my Religion to prize Gratitude above all things, I could not be just should I not most earnestly desire the happiness of that Prince, unto whose single endeavours I owe both my *Civil* and *Religious Liberty*; for he must needs be a very great stranger in this our *Israel*, who doth not acknowledge that his Majesties Personal and passionate interposing did confirm our *Indempnity*, and his most pious and unequalled Declaration hath sufficiently evidenced, that he is not unwilling to indulge the utmost extent of sober and Christian *Liberty*; which are expressions of so much goodness, in the midst of so great *Power*, and after so many provocations, that he hath not the heart of a Man much less of a Christian, who doth not alwaies preserve a thankful remembrance of them; I am sure they are so deeply impressed upon me, that if in any writing of mine there be so much as a word, which can be wrested to the lessening of His Majesties just Authority, I intreat your Lordship to take notice that I do hereby utterly disown it, as being directly contrary to my professed Principles, which lead me to no one point of outward practise more strictly, than an exact and punctual obedience unto his Majesties Commands.

I must confess, that ever since I became a Christian, which stile I do not own, either to my Birth, or Education; (having then sensibly experimented the great difficulty of believing) I alwayes doubted whether the Magistrates Power did properly extend to things of *Religious Concernments*; and accordingly I handled that point, while it was *Res integra*, & before ever there was any fear of Imposing: But since the Parliament now have decided that Controversie, and put the matter out of Question, I think my self not only discharged from medling with it, but likewise concluded by what I have already declared, which was in these very words: *That though for the present, I make use of that Indulgence, which His Majesty hath been pleased to allow unto Tender Consciences, that is, to all Rational and sober Christians (the continuance of which, I dare not so much wrong His Majesties Goodness, as once to question) yet should His Majesty be prevailed upon, for some Reason of State, to enjoyn outward Conformity; I am resolved, by the help of God, either to submit with chearfulness, or else to suffer with silence. For as*

Preface to the Great Question, &c.

there

there is an Active Disobedience, which is, to Resist; so there is a Passive Disobedience, and that is, to Repine; neither of which I can by any means approve of, since whoever I cannot conscienciously do I think myself oblieged to suffer for, with as much joy, and with as little resistance, as if any other Act of Obedience were called for from me, I may perhaps be too partial to my self, but certainly in general I may pronounce, that whoever preserves this Temper, let his Judgement be what it will, in reference to *Ceremonies*, yet he cannot be supposed incompatible with waies of publick safety: since he that quietly suffers the Penalty of any Law, I mean where it is a Law meerly of outward Order, doth as really fulfil the intent of it, as he that actually performs all its injunctions; for such kind of Obedience doth argue a more than Ordinary degree of Love, and that, in the Apostles sense, *is the fulfilling of the Law.* And without speaking any thing in my own Commendation, my silence under my Illegal exclusion from my place in *Christ-Church*, and my late voluntary forsaking a Living I was possessed of, that I might prevent any possibility of seeming to disobey Publick Authority, doth sufficiently proclaim the peaceableness of my Temper.

But my Lord, should I ever have so far stept out of the bounds of my Calling, as to write a Publick *Memento* (which in the very name of it, contradicts the Act of *Oblivion*) should I have so much aspersed the present Government, as to say; *that Defamers of the Government, if Presbyterians, scape better than their Accusers*: That *Promoters and Justifiers of the murder of the late King, are still continued publick Preachers, and can come off for Printing and publishing down-right Treason, when I have much ado to escape for telling it.* Should I have said, That *great dangers are still remaining, in not preferring the Kings Friends,* (as if his Majesty would prefer any, but those that were of unexpected Loyalty) should I have added further, that *the danger is great, and number also of ill chosen Justices*: All which passages directly tend not onely to defame the Government, but to render it ridiculous, as if it were not politick enough to preserve it self. Should I, after I had in some former Pamphlet expresly Libelled your Lordship, afterwards by making some dull Aphorisms about a *Favourite*, labour to abuse you to your face; I should then think I had done enough to deserve, not onely the Name, but likewise the Punishment, that is due to one that is factious and Turbulent.

Memento. p. 6.

P. 8. & 228.

P. 232.

P. 105.

Yet

Yet, my Lord, all this, and something worse is said in Print, by one Mr. *L'Estrange*, a Gentleman whom I never saw, but yet I have heard so much ill of him, that I think my self obliged to thank him for his Defamations of me; since by confessing himself, in the same Bok, to be guilty of *Drunkenness and Prophaness*; he hath said much more than I can knowingly charge him with, and I am sure more than enough to discredit his own Testimony. For he that is neither *Sober* to himself, nor *Religious* to God, cannot possibly be *Just* and *Civil* to men; and *Impiety* will easily lead him to *Forgery*: I shall not therefore seem to plead my own Concernment against him; since my Credit and Esteem with Good men is either very little, and then my sollicitousness will but little promote it; or else it is so great, that it is already placed beyond the Reach of such Rude Assaults and Battery, and needs not my own Pen for its Defence and Vindication.

P. 41, 42.

But, My Lord, how careless soever I am of securing my own Fame, yet in zeal to the Publick Honour and Faith of our Nation, I must take leave to say this, that for any to dedicate a Book to your Lordship (who are by your place the great Conservator of our Laws) and in it presume to break that very Law, which His Majesty hath appeared to be most tender of, and that so openly, as to revive the mention of our War, under the Title of *Rebellion*, to call the *Lords* and *Commons* then assembled in Parliament, a Company of *Schismaticks* and *Rebels*; and with them, to asperse the whole City of *London*, who either never intentionally forfeited, or else have Nobly redeemed the mistake of their Loyalty: This, my Lord, is an insolence of so infectious a Nature, that, if your Lordship doth not suppress it, men who love their Honours above their Lives, will not think themselves fairly dealt with. For I must leave it to your Lordship to judge, how little security we may expect from any of our old Laws, and how little Obedience can justly be exacted into the New ones; if, in the face of the world, and with your Lordships Privity, nay under your Protection, our late *Magna Charta* can be, in the very Terms and Design of it, so apparently violated.

P. 65. & 250.

I know very well, that the Person who doth this, presumes much upon his former Loyalty; and would make his past Ser-

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vices compound for his present Frenzy; and truly, my Lord, I must confess, that had all this ill Language been vented by one of whose honesty there never had been any suspicion; had one defied the *Presbyterians* (as this Author is pleased to call all that are not of his, that is, that are of any Religion) whose *Life*, or at least whose *Loyalty* had been untainted; then the worthiness of the Person would very much have mitigated the infamy of his Slanders; but for *Shimei* to curse *Absalom*; for *Cromwels Spy* to cry out *Treason*; for the *Protectors Earwigge*, to rayl upon the *Kings Enemies*; this is a thing so very indecent, and incongruous, that nothing but your Lordships condemning Master *L'Estrange* to his own *Whip*, or, because that is not smart enough, to the *Beadles*, will ever cure his Lask, or bring him within any tollerable compass of sobriety.

I would not willingly, while I plead for the keeping of our Laws by others, be found a Transgressor of them my self; yet since he doth bear himself so much upon his Innocence, as if he needed not the Laws protection; I must crave leave to repeat what I know your Lordsh. is fully acquainted with, that this very Pamphleter did heretofore frequently sollicite that he might be admitted to private conference with *Oliver*, and humbled himself to so low an ebbe of baseness, that he often brought his Fiddle under his Cloak to facilitate his entry; and when he saw that crafty Tyrant would not admit of one, whom he knew unfit for the management of a serious Treason; he then by little Bribes, bestowed upon his neatest Attendants, shewed how willing he was to purchase Access at any Rate; All which Attempts were nothing else, but so much unfledged Treason, which would not so long have fluttered in the dark, had but that Tyrant thought him worthy of imployment, and added wings to his waxen disposition.

And thus, my Lord, though perhaps with more brevity, than the Cause; yet greater length than your Lordships Occasions will bear, I have not onely defended my self, but likewise uncased my Accuser; for whom while I implore your Lordships *Mercy* (for as he stands thus naked in his colours, *Justice* will never spare him) I beg nothing for my self, but so much *Equity*, that I may have leave to plead my own cause at your Lordships Bar, before you conclude me guilty; and since, I doubt not but

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your Lordship will allow, that difference in Opinion about *Religious Matters*, may easily be reconciled to a candid pursuance of the same *Civil Interests*; since diversity in *Habits*, need not alter the disposition in hearts; and since he that desires sincerely to serve God, ought not to be counted a stranger, because he serves him not in his neighbours fashion: As long as there is an Eternal Truth in such kind of Principles, and Moderation enough in your Lordship to close with them, I shall not so much wrong your Goodness, as to despair of your Favour: And though the greatest part of your Lordship's Followers, may perhaps croud to you for eminence of your Place, and the Height of your Power; Yet I can assure your Lordship, that your great Personal Worth, and the Excellence of your Civil accomplishments, together with that strict league of Friendship, which such Resemblance of Virtuous Qualities must needs produce, between your Lordship, and that Right Honourable and truly Noble Person, to whom I am related, are solely reflected upon by me, when I take leave thus publickly to profess my self

MY LORD,

Drury-Lane,
May 10. 1662.

Your Lordships most humble
and most obedient Servant,
EDWARD BAGSHAW.

FINIS.

BIBL. CANT. ACAD.